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This of Gower, this of the man who, to quote Lowell, "raised tediousness to a science," this of the man whose colorless, mechanical narratives drag along in couplets that are the despair of any one who tries to read them aloud! The one principle which Gower thoroughly understood was to allow no contrasts nor distinctions in his tales. His incidents, characters, and settings preserve a strict *incognito*. One of those "clear, bright little passages" comes to mind, from the tale of Daphne:—

"A dart of Led he caste and smot,
Which was al cold and nothing hot."

In the study of Chaucer's work, Professor Ker writes with a fine discrimination regarding the influences which produced the master poet, and although the chapter is rather disorderly and hurried, it gives one a sense of depth. The psychology of Chaucer is interpreted with a sure perception of cause and effect. The poet is not depicted as an artificial register of impressions, but as a vivid, thoughtful personality, always eager for experience. This, after all, is the true aim of literary criticism,—to show that literature is no accident, but a development of inner and of outer resources, a mysterious but not inexplicable impulse that forces men to reveal their imaginative perceptions. Precise and well-arranged details we can get in formal text-books, but few of these books give us what Professor Ker does,—a conception of the charm and beauty and rich significance to be found in the study of literary history.

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Les accents dans l'écriture française. Etude critique de leurs diverses fonctions dans le passé et dans le présent, par ALBERT SCHINZ. Paris, Champion, 1912. 81 pp.

This interesting contribution to the question of French spelling reform was first published in the *Revue de Philologie française*, and does

not aim to give a complete and detailed history of the use of accent-marks in French, such as is found in Dr. Hillmann's dissertation, *Geschichte der Accentsetzung im Französischen seit der Erfindung des Buchdrucks*, published at Halle three years ago, a work to which Mr. Schinz copiously refers. It rather proposes to bring out the salient features of the long and complex evolution of modern usage. Consequently Mr. Schinz frequently passes over the names of more famous grammarians in favor of obscurer ones who have happened to advocate a rule that, for good or evil, eventually prevailed.

Accent-marks, or rather signs that resembled them, were used in mediæval manuscripts as well as in the first printed Latin books. Mr. Schinz, however, reaches the conclusion that these signs had a very different function from their older one in Greek and their newer one in French. "There is no transition from the Greek to the French through the means of mediæval Latin except death, and later, in some points only . . . resurrection." The use of accent-marks in French is consequently a case of "spontaneous generation," brought about by existing conditions; if no accent-marks had ever existed before, the grammarians of the sixteenth century would undoubtedly have invented them.

It was the generalizing and democratizing of education fostered by the invention of the printing-press that generated the use of accent-marks, consequently their real history does not begin till the sixteenth century. This history (*e. g.*, the "common-sense" influence of the *Précieuses*, the nugatory attitude of the French Academy) points several morals which in the matter of linguistic progress and reform might well be taken to heart even today, and that not in France alone.

It is natural that the chief interest of the conclusions which Mr. Schinz reaches concerning the present use (or abuse) of accents should lie in their bearing on the question of spelling reform. But to fully endorse these conclusions it would be necessary to completely accept Mr. Schinz's premises, and it is not always possible to reconcile these with some of the prevalent

opinions concerning the actual phonetic status of modern French.

It will be sufficient to examine here Mr. Schinz's views of the function of accent-marks in connection with the different *e*-sounds in French, as it is by far the most important. Mr. Schinz distinguishes six distinct varieties of *e*'s: (1) mute *e*; (2) semi-mute *e*; (3) short closed *e*; (4) long closed *e*; (5) short open *e*; (6) long open *e*. The first and second are easily known by position; the third and fourth are only found in the stressed syllable of a word as *é*, or known by position before silent *r* and *z*; the fifth is written *ê* when medial, or *ès* when final, or is known by position being checked; the sixth is written *ê* before a sounded syllable (*bêtise*), and *ê* before a mute or semi-mute syllable (*bête*), also *è* in same position (*calèche*), and finally known by position before *rr* (*guerre*).

On the analogy of *extrême* / *extrémité*, the circumflex should be abolished in words like *bêtise*, and the *é* would eventually lose its exceptional length. The grave could also be profitably substituted for the circumflex in words like *bête*; and the exceptional writing *erre* be reduced to the regular *ère*. But the reform need not stop here. In the body of a word *è* stands for long open *e* and *é* for short open *e*, but there also is a rule that a sounded *e* is long before a mute syllable and short before a sounded one: there is no need therefore for two different accents, and *é* could stand both in *père* and *périr*. The unusual notation *ès* might also be suppressed. Only *é* would remain, used so that:

(I) final *é* would always represent closed *e* except in *és* (the *s* not being plural), where it would stand for the short open sound of *e*;

(II) medial *é* would represent: (a) short open *e* before a pronounced syllable; (b) long open *e* before a mute or semi-mute syllable. Furthermore Mr. Schinz considers that semi-mute *e* is not really a French sound, that it sins against the phonetic system of the language which, freed from the influence of grammarians, would quickly assimilate words like *tenir* and *genou* to *ténébreux* and *génie*. Much could be said on this point, but it may be suffi-

cient to remark here that it is the "popular" words *tenir* and *genou*, not the patently "learned words" *ténébreux* and *génie* that contain the objectionable un-French semi-mute. Assuming that the semi-mute should disappear from the language, Mr. Schinz proposes to drop *é* altogether in pretonic syllables. In addition to this, since the sound of final *e* can easily be determined by the sense of the words, even the acute accent could in theory be abolished, the following rules being a sufficient guide for pronunciation:

(I) Final *e* is silent (the sign of the plural making no difference); *es* stands for short open *e*.

(II) Medial *e* is (a) short open when checked and when it precedes a pronounced syllable; (b) long open before a mute or semi-mute syllable.

However, Mr. Schinz concludes that final *é* is a help in reading even to "intellectuals," and can therefore be allowed to stand; medial *é* helps to distinguish between semi-mute and open *e* for those readers who are not sure of the correct pronunciation, and will therefore persist as long as this "dead" sound is kept in speech. The complete abolition of the grave and circumflex accents is advocated as a distinct benefit to the language.

In its simplicity Mr. Schinz's system is certainly alluring, but the objections to it are obvious. Mr. Schinz's views both of the quantity and the quality of the *e*-sounds differ considerably from the one taken by some of the leading authorities on phonetics. With regard to the pretonic *e*'s, Mr. Schinz himself states that he differs from the indications given by the *Dictionnaire Général*; with regard to length it can be pointed out that of the nine words quoted by Mr. Schinz (pp. 59, 60) as containing long *e*, four are marked short in Michaelis & Passy's dictionary; these words being *calèche*, *fidèle*, *achèterai*, *avènement*.

These objections do not at all question the existence of the pronunciation assumed and advocated by Mr. Schinz, but merely its prevalence. The question, moreover, is not one of the kind that can be solved at long range; its solution must be left to those who are in a con-

dition to make not only minute individual but also broad statistical observations.

Meanwhile Mr. Schinz's study cannot fail to suggest much that is of interest to those who are concerned in the vital question of spelling reform.

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The Philosophy of Schiller, by EMIL CARL WILM. Boston: John W. Luce & Co., 1912. 183 pp.

A valuable presentation of an interesting subject. Schiller unquestionably enjoys the distinction of being the most philosophical man of letters, or the most literary philosopher of modern times, and while he is thought of even in his own country primarily as a poet and dramatist it is to the philosophical substratum in his writings that their enduring cultural value is undoubtedly in large measure due. The late Professor James has somewhere quaintly remarked that it is of greater importance for the mistress of a lodging house to be acquainted with the philosophy of life of a prospective inmate than with the size of his bank account. One might add that the bank account holds out to the individual a far less certain hope of earthly immortality than a correct system of philosophy. Modern America is perhaps as indifferent to philosophy, pure or applied, as any country or nation which is so fortunate as to be considered enlightened, and it is therefore here and now that the writings of a Schiller and the sympathetic critique of trained interpreters can be of the most immediate service. The writer welcomes the present volume as one fitted to acquaint the reader not merely with the ideas that governed the mind of one of Germany's most high-souled and gifted writers but to launch him upon the main current of philosophical thought that has flowed with less interruption perhaps than any other stream of human activity from ancient times down to the present day. Professor Wilm gives,

indeed, more than the title of his book would indicate, in that a whole chapter is devoted to "The Historical Background, Leibniz and the British Moralists," while toward the end of the discussion Schiller's relation to Post-Kantian Idealism, chiefly as represented by Fichte, is considered at some length. Greater attention is, of course, paid to the influence of Kant, and it is here that Schiller's real value as a philosophical thinker comes most clearly into view. For as Goethe, according to his own statement, was led to his evolutionary view of nature (*Metamorphosen*) through his instinctive apprehension of the inadequacy of the Linnæan system of classification as a sufficient basis for scientific thought, so Schiller, dissatisfied with the neglect by Kant of the sensuous side of man's nature, is led to his conception of beautiful conduct (*die schöne Sittlichkeit*) and the beautiful soul (*die schöne Seele*), in which *inclination vs. duty* has given way to *inclination to duty*.

The fundamental difference in ethical thought between these two eminent contemporaries is indicated most happily by Professor Wilm in these words:

"While Kant had unbounded confidence in the power of reason, and was jealous of its prerogatives, regarding feeling as an incompetent and dangerous guide to the will, Schiller was rather inclined to doubt the capacity of reason, considered in independence of the emotional nature, to furnish a sufficient motive for conduct, and had unlimited confidence, on the other hand, in the possibility of the education of feeling to the point where the will might surrender itself completely to its guidance, and have no occasion to fear for the consequences."

A superficial criticism, sometimes directed against Schiller, though more frequently against Goethe, is that he neglected the deeper interests of humanity, particularly its religious aspirations, in an exaggerated devotion to the æsthetic pleasures of art. The answer to this criticism consists not in minimizing the value which Schiller placed on art but rather in showing what lofty purposes he hoped to attain through the æsthetic education of man.

"As in art we obey the law of nature with gladness, so also should it be in conduct, which, from one point of view, may be considered as